

# **4. Capturing New Words**

Chamorro Dictionary Project

April 2009

# New Words

- Many words of cultural significance are not in the 1975 *Dictionary*
- These words will be collected by the thematic groups
- But there are also many *ordinary* words which are not in the 1975 *Dictionary*

# Nouns

- **apígige** “dessert made from coconut (*månhan biha*) and tapioca starch, poured in banana leaf and grilled”
- **aktibidåt** “activity”
- **balaheru** “good card player, fortuneteller who predicts using cards”

# Verbs and Adjectives

- **despåtta** “take apart, separate”
- **teknikåt** “technical”

# Other Parts of Speech

- **kesibåyi** “regardless”
- **sin embåtgo** “even so, regardless, nevertheless”

# Indigenous Words

- **agon** “do again”

# Words Borrowed from Spanish

- **desfruta** “divulge, expose, reveal”
- **eskalera** “segment, stage, phase”
- **mensâhi** “message, announcement, information”
- **pattipasi3n** “participation”

# Words Borrowed from English

- **hos** “hose” (in Saipan but not Guam)
- **kompiuta** “computer”
- **konggrayulasi6n** “congratulations”
- **teknik6t** “technical”

(Which ones should have Dictionary entries?)

# Words from Older Generations

- **tat** “[meaning unclear]”, in  
Estaba giya Tinian un **tat** Johnson yan i  
famiã-ña [*Estoria-hu*, p. 1]

(Should these be in the *Dictionary* if no one can verify them?)

# Words from Younger Generations

- **kunu** “if” [corresponding to the standard form **kumu**]

(Should words like these be included?)

# Words Crucial for Our Project

- **buet** “vowel”
- **utugrafiha** “orthography”

# Some Strategies for Capturing New Words

- Active listening
- Conversations about language
- Semantic fields
- Active reading

# Active Listening

- Words that come up in conversation, whether they are unusual or very ordinary, might not be in the *Dictionary* (**apígige'**, **piót**)

# Conversations about Language

- Words used on different islands  
“In Guam they say **tilipas**, but in Saipan they say **hos**”
- Words used by different generations  
“Young people say **kunu** for **kumu**”

- Indigenous words versus borrowed words

**fino' / lengguåhi**

**sångan / kuentos**

**må'gas / kabesa**

**såkkån / åñu**

**atu'åsi / potlumenos**

(This can be useful when looking for indigenous words.)

# Semantic Fields

- Words for sounds made by animals and birds
- Words for complaining
- Words for praising, criticizing, insulting
- Words for different postures
- Words for personal appearance  
etc.

# Active Reading

- Books in Chamorro (*Estoria-hu, Estreyas Marianas, the Bible*)
- E-mail messages
- Web postings
- Newspapers (*North Star*, letters to the editor)

# Checking Whether a Word is in the *Dictionary*

- Remove any affixes
  - The infixes **-um-** and **-in-** and the prefixes **fan-**, **man-**, **ma-**
  - Reduplication for the progressive (**sisigi**) or for emphasis (**dangkulo/o/o**)
  - Derivational affixes with predictable meanings
- Search for the resulting base (= root or stem) in the *Dictionary*

# Search widely

- The word might be in the *Dictionary*, but spelled differently
  - a word beginning with a vowel might be spelled with **h** plus vowel in the *Dictionary* (or vice versa)
  - a word containing **e** or **o** might be spelled with **i** or **u** in the *Dictionary* (or vice versa)

- a word containing a geminate (doubled) consonant might be spelled with a single consonant in the *Dictionary*
- a word containing **tch** or **dy** might be spelled with just **ch** or **y** in the Dictionary
- a word containing **ngk** might be spelled with **nk** in the Dictionary
- a word containing **np** or **nb** might be spelled with **mp** or **mb** in the Dictionary

- a word with two adjacent vowels might have those vowels separated by **h** or **‘** in the *Dictionary* (or vice versa)
- an “affix” that you removed to get the base might actually be part of the base (or vice versa)
- sometimes it can help to look up the word’s English definition in the English-Chamorro part of the *Dictionary*

- If you find the word in the *Dictionary* with the right meaning but a different spelling, then there is a spelling issue to resolve, but the word is not new

# Examples

- **despãsiu** is spelled **despasio** in the *Dictionary*
- **emprenta** is spelled **imprenta** in the *Dictionary*
- **ãggon** is spelled **agon** in the *Dictionary*
- **diha** is spelled **dia** in the *Dictionary*

# More examples

- **alatcha** is spelled **halacha** in the *Dictionary*
- **ollo'** is spelled **ohlo'** in the *Dictionary*
- **sinåla** is spelled **siñåla** in the *Dictionary*
- **na'yiyi** is not in the *Dictionary*, but it is derived from **nå'yi**, which *is* in the *Dictionary*

# Phrases and derived words

- Sometimes a phrase or a derived word is not already in the *Dictionary*, but its **meaning** or **pronunciation** is unpredictable enough that it should have its own *Dictionary* entry

# Examples

- **åggon håya**
- **månhan biha**

And, possibly,

- **muske (for ombres ki)**

Si Yu'us ma'åse' !